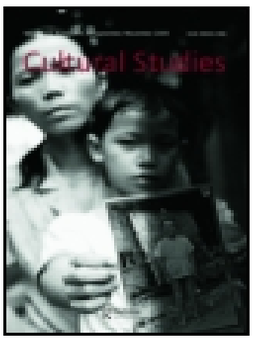

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'"Demo" and "cracy"': music, trust, and authentication in Mexico's 2018 elections

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ABSTRACT

Taking as its focal point the Mexican national elections of 2018, this article explores how music, often circulated in the form of online videos, has responded to low political trust in an emerging multiparty system. It explores home-made videos made to foment trust in the election's eventual victor, and a project funded by the National Electoral Institute (INE) to use rap to facilitate informed participation in the elections. It engages with the literature on musical 'authenticity' to discuss what it explores as two forms of musical 'authentication': one personal, which authenticates or vouch for individual political leaders, and another systemic, looking to foment legitimacy by supporting voters' ability to verify political claims. This article thus contributes to the understanding of political systems undergoing democratic transitions, arguing for attention to democratization as an affective, creative, and multiple process.

KEYWORDS Elections; democracy; trust; music; citizenship; affect

The anxieties about democracy accompanying the illiberal turn in world politics have seen the re-emergence of discourses restating the importance of classical liberal models of rationality for democratic functioning (Runciman 2017, Sunstein 2017). In these debates the role of musical or sonic creativity is ambivalent at best; for instance, historian Timothy Snyder, in a widely read guide to resisting tyrannical governments, emphasizes the value of literature and print media for democratic participation while associating authoritarian mindsets with 'shamanistic incantation' (2017, pp. 60–80). In turn, the voices of these scholars conflict with research showing how affect and emotion, often mediated by music, permeate political life (e.g. van Zoonen 2005, Papacharissi 2015). While plenty of recent scholarship engages the intersection of music, democracy and citizenship (Adlington 2019), scholars of music have done comparatively little work on the musical worlds of the

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most important events for the functioning of democracies – elections – especially in recently established democratic systems.

This article examines the campaign song made for the Mexican national elections of 2018, which ended in a victory for the anti-establishment candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador (commonly referred to as AMLO). These elections were marked by low trust in political candidates and the widespread sharing of so-called fake news. Equally, music played a prominent role during these elections, and was the subject of frequent comment in the broadcast and print media. In contemporary Mexico the activity of electoral democracy is, as one musician put it to me, characterized by 'noise, commotion [*escándalo*] and partying'.[1] Music is used as entertainment at political rallies, to provide information to voters, and to vouch for candidates' honesty. This has effects on musical livelihoods: democracy in Mexico has long been costly (Lomnitz-Adler 2001, p. 78) and elections constitute a periodic source of income for many musicians. The prevalence of campaign song raised questions about the 'commensurability' (Spielman 2019) of the democratic process in Mexico. Campaign song could be understood as a culturally specific feature of Mexican democracy – although cultures of campaign song are, in fact, witnessed in new or fragile democracies throughout the world (e.g. Averill 1997, Shepler 2010).[2] Most significant, campaign song could be bemoaned as a marker of low democratic development and of a paucity of deliberative dialogue; a sign, as one television commentator put it, that the campaigns were 'in diapers'.[3]

It is the latter point that I take up here: this article is written in response to anxieties about campaign song, especially among Mexico's wealthier classes, which take democracy and democratic participation as a standardized set of practices and idioms, implicitly associated with notions of Western modernity. These anxieties do not allow for democratization as a plural, open-ended process, marked by multiple, culturally embedded 'affective literacies' (Tadiar 2009). Grounded in ethnographic research with musicians, however, this article aims to understand music within Mexican electoral politics, rather than as a threat to, or distraction from, it; and to draw attention to the experiences and contributions of a marginalized group of creative workers. To do this, I link the affordances of music used during these elections to the layered problems of low political trust.

Trust and authentication

I adapt one thread within popular music studies to the study of music and elections: that of 'authenticity'. Authenticity has been the subject of many studies by popular music scholars, who characterize it as a fluid notion constantly renegotiated in the texts of popular music (e.g. Peterson 2013). In turn, Moore (2002) has foregrounded 'authentication', a term which decentres the

focus away from musicians, and draws attention to audiences' practices of listening to music. Understood in this way, authenticity may consist of the sense of the performer's integrity, a feeling that performances are honest to the experience of the listener, or the notion that a performance is faithful to a given musical tradition. Here, I connect the first and second definitions – which Moore labels third- and first-person authenticity respectively – to the business of electoral politics. Exploring the multiple semantic pathways of the term 'authentication' may prove especially productive, since we may also speak of authentication in relation to claims to fact. To authenticate is to assure that something, or someone, is reliable or trustworthy, meaning that musical and political authentication may overlap (Behr 2015, p. 2, Redhead and Street 1989, pp. 177–178).

'Authentication' may thus articulate cultural studies to a core current debate: the relationship between democracies, trust, and truth. Where scholars writing before the illiberal turn could juxtapose tyrannically imposed 'official truths' with pluralistic, subjective experience (e.g. Kitcher 2004), liberal historians and political commentators see a lack of concern for truth as a condition for totalitarian rule, undermining means by which power may be held accountable (Runciman 2017, Snyder 2017, Sunstein 2017, pp. 41–48). In turn, knowledge attains social value to the extent that we trust that it will (Schütz 1946). Yet trust is difficult to define; scholars have characterized it variously as an attitude or 'belief that individuals hold about other individuals' likely actions' (Cleary and Stokes 2006, p. 17), a resource with economic value (Fukuyama 1995), or a strategy for dealing with uncertainty (Sztompka 1999, p. 25). The development of quantitative means to measure trust has allowed political scientists to model its relationship to political systems.[4] Nevertheless, the relationship between democracies and trust resists measurement; it is complex and counter-intuitive. Democratic concepts such as accountability institutionalize distrust for those in power (Sztompka 1999, p. 140);[5] further, there is a fine line between trust and corruption (Morris and Klesner 2010). Tilly (2005) argues that the ways that relational 'trust networks' – formed by sets of strong ties through which participants access resources and organize risky, long-term projects (4) – become integrated into public politics are vital for the emergence of democracies. Democratization, Tilly highlights, has both driven and required the integration of trust networks across many contexts (124, 136). The integration of trust networks shows that personal and political trust are not easily extricated from one another.

If, as Tilly supposes, trust is a condition of relationships, it is intuitive to study the intimate and affective life of trust (cf. Engdahl and Lidskog 2014, p. 714, Hosking 2014, p. 2). It is also evident that trust is both culturally embedded and aesthetically expressed. Yet where this topic has received very little attention within cultural studies, the notions of authenticity and

authentication as discussed by popular music scholars provide ways to engage this discipline with questions of political trust. To do so is to recognize trust as complex, dependent on the matrix of socially negotiated meanings often taken as 'culture', on processes of reception by which people come to associate trust with certain forms of expression, and on the specific affordances presented by distinct musical genres. It is, in Frith's words, to trace 'how [music] sets up the idea of "truth" in the first place' (1987, p. 36).

This article shows how music presents resources for 'authentication' upon which electoral politics may draw. I hear the music accompanying Mexico's 2018 elections in the context of the low legitimacy of Mexico's political system (Secretaria de Gobernación 2013, p. 28), tied to declining support for democracy itself, and crises of political trust within new democracies in general (Catterberg and Moreno 2006, Meyer 2017, p. 55). Processes of authentication of music, I show, become simultaneously entangled with authentication of candidates' trustworthiness, and imbricated with trust in Mexico's political system. Above all, I am interested in exploring how emergent musical languages of authentication dovetail with wider political discourse regarding trust.

I propose to explore what may be understood as two forms of musical authentication: *personal* and *systemic*. The first rooted music's role in the fomentation of personal relations of trust with individual politicians; it tended to invoke discrete affective literacies disseminated through music. The second played an informational role aimed at facilitating the hearer to participate in electoral politics, and implied democratization as a universalizing project. My methodology here is pragmatic, based on fourteen in-depth interviews with musicians and public relations professionals; cyber-ethnography, drawing from data publicly available online; and textual analyses of music videos created for political candidates. Although this combination of methods does not allow the efficacy of musical interventions into political campaigns to be judged, it does afford analysis on the level of culturally embedded intentionality. I will begin by providing some context for the use of music in Mexico's elections.

Music, electoral politics, and transition

The 2018 Mexican elections attracted deep anxieties to do with trust, legitimacy and truth. Writing in *Proceso* three weeks prior to the election, journalist Héctor Tajonar condemned the 'dictatorship of propaganda' which was 'not interested in the veracity of their information' but was instead 'directed at the emotions, not the intelligence'. Tajonar lamented that the 'low level of Mexican democracy' rendered the country 'fragile and manipulable', for which the only antidote was 'reasoned and critical analysis'.[6] Other writers in the same magazine, Ana Cristina Ruelas and Ricardo Reyes, emphasized

the role of an 'informed society' in holding government to account, and argued that 'in Mexico we've become accustomed to a State that administers the information' via government public relations spending and media dependence on state funding, both legacies of single-party rule.[7] These arguments indexed both real histories of authoritarianism in Mexico, and the elusive Enlightenment figure of the rational, disinterested, information-driven citizen, simultaneously idealized, desirable, unattainable and othered. As Lomnitz points out, this othering is rooted in racist notions of national inferiority, often echoed in everyday parlance describing Mexico as a 'third-world country', but most typically perpetuated by elite voices standing in for 'silent Mexico' (2001: xvii–xviii).

As it turned out, Enlightenment nostalgia defied electoral reality. The eventual winner of the election, AMLO built his campaign around the promise that he would 'end corruption', alongside the assertion that he was the only trustworthy presidential candidate (Hanrahan and Aroch Fugellie 2019). Often described as a left populist, the candidate's campaign was built around the idea that he had previously been the victim of electoral fraud, in 2006 and 2012, when he had led the center-Left Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD).[8] Within AMLO's discourse, he and his party, Morena (a portmanteau of Movement of National Regeneration), were opposed by a deceitful 'mafia of power'. This phrase provided the candidate with an ideal defense against media onslaughts; other candidates, along with most print media and television outlets, labelled AMLO a 'danger for Mexico' and drew comparisons with authoritarian Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro.[9] AMLO responded by labelling these attacks as a *guerra sucia* ('dirty war'), thus linking them to the repressive governments of the 1960s and 1970s (Calderón and Cedillo 2012).

AMLO thus succeeded in portraying himself as an insurgent, anti-establishment candidate in a context of low trust in Mexican political institutions (Greene and Sánchez-Talanquer 2018). In the twentieth century, single-party rule under the PRI (Revolutionary Institutional Party) was ensured by practices maintaining the illusion of democracy, such as vote-buying, clientelism, corruption, and influence over the press (Schedler 2005, Tuckman 2012). These practices continue in the present, as Mexico's ongoing transition to multiparty democracy since the late twentieth century has involved new parties in the techniques of maintaining power established by the PRI (Hilgers 2008). According to one study, 5 million votes were bought in the 2018 elections, mostly on behalf of the established parties PRI, right-wing PAN (National Action Party) and centre-left PRD (Party of the Democratic Revolution),[10] and one-third of the electorate had been approached about vote-buying.[11] The 2018 elections also saw a wave of so-called fake news in Mexico, mostly targeted against AMLO and Morena.[12] There was a continuity between these practices and those of the previous national election in

2012, when bots supporting the PRI flooded Twitter (Pomerantsev 2019, pp. 70–81).

The 2018 presidential election, then, combined long-standing and novel strategies for electoral success; but it was also unusual in its focus on a single political personality.[13] In turn, the fact that AMLO's campaign was constructed around a sense of personal authenticity created an important role for popular music. On 13 June 2018 Belinda, a high-profile Mexican singer and actor, released a music video covering 'Mexico Lindo Y Querido' dedicated to AMLO. Originally written by Chucho Monge, the song is a paean to Mexico in which the nation is narrated in the informal second person ('I sing to your volcanos, to your meadows and flowers, which are as talismans of the love of my loves'). Belinda's delivery plays on the intimacy of these lyrics; her voice often cracks at the moment of producing sound, and she ends several lines with a *diminuendo* in which vocal production is overtaken by the sound of breathing. This intimate effect is enhanced by the sparse orchestration; where well-known versions of this song, such as that sung by Golden Age star Jorge Negrete, are accompanied by a full mariachi ensemble, Belinda is accompanied by a single tenor stringed instrument (not displayed in the video, but likely either a ukulele or a jarana). A series of calls to action appear in the video, such as 'If you don't dream today, when? If you don't make the difference, who will?' and 'Faced with fear, the homeland [*patria*] calls us to love' – a phrase which both implicitly critiques what AMLO had labelled the campaign *guerra sucia* and recalls the Morena campaign slogan 'Peace and Love'. Indeed, the whole video places footage recalling Mexico – such as a woman standing in Mexico City's Zócalo and a man walking barefoot along a rural path – underneath the word 'Love', which is revealed at the end of the video as the camera slowly zooms out, followed by the campaign slogan 'AMLO 2018'. Towards the end, the video reveals three shots of AMLO: two with his wife, Beatriz Gutierrez, the first as they walk in an embrace along the side of a motorway and the second as they gently touch foreheads, smiling, in a recording studio; and footage of AMLO standing on a beach, embracing the pair's youngest son, looking down into his eyes and kissing him on the forehead.

Belinda's video has been liked over 25,000 times on Twitter, and has been retweeted almost 11,000 times.[14] In key ways, it aligns with the strategy pursued by Morena during the 2018 elections, especially as it decries an anti-AMLO campaign of fear and proposes 'love' instead. Yet this video was also personal and emotional in intent: it linked first- and second-person authenticity (Moore 2002), closely connected with popular music in and beyond Mexico, with the familial intimacy of AMLO's personal life. Such a connection builds on specifically Mexican histories: it is facilitated by the historical personalization of the post-revolutionary state in Mexico, mediated through songs

like 'Mexico Lindo Y Querido' (Velázquez and Vaughan 2006, pp. 112–113). In the terms of Martin Stokes, it presents an 'impossible love' (2010, p. 69) between citizen and leader; the search for justice is musically and visually identified as fragile, in need of protection.

By contrast, competing political parties' musical efforts were occasionally criticized for a *lack* of first-person authenticity. A campaign advert circulated on national television in March 2018 by the ruling PRI featured groups of actors enthusiastically singing an upbeat, anthemic soft rock song in states across Mexico ('We are pride, we are colors, we are the people, there are millions of us/we are your shield, we are passion/with the flag in our hearts') and concludes by showing the phrase 'The pride of the PRI is in its people'.[15] The video was panned by Milenio commentator Álvaro Cueva for featuring actors instead of real party activists: 'the result, far from being a song of authentic joy, is a hymn to falsehood, to something that doesn't exist […] This advert is weird, it says things that aren't true'.[16] Cueva's critique targeted an especially damaging ambiguity: the highly unpopular PRI incumbent, Enrique Peña Nieto, had long been criticized for having a false, polished persona (Hanrahan and Aroch Fugellie 2019, p. 125). It pointed towards authentication's multiple temporal layers; ways in which present authentication processes were dependent on the affective legacies of the past.

As Cueva's negative response suggests, while it sought to accumulate and transmit authenticity, campaign music could also attract suspicion and scandal. The most effective way to counter a campaign song was to question the integrity of its author; correspondingly, social media comments responding to campaign songs frequently imputed that musicians had been paid large sums to record them. Belinda herself was the target of a last-minute smear campaign: as she performed in so-called AMLOfest, a free-to-attend concert held to close the Morena campaign in 87,000-seater stadium Estadio Azteca, fabricated receipts circulated online purporting to show that she had charged the Morena campaign 42 million pesos (roughly 2 million US dollars) for her appearance.[17] Equally, genuine intrigue frequently arose around the financing of campaign song. One of the most-shared pro-Morena songs in the 2018 campaign, 'La Niña Bien', was presented as university coursework and accompanied by a video partly filmed in a church; it was soon discovered that the video's protagonist did not exist, that the leaders of the church in question were unaware that a political video was being filmed there, and that the source of the money used to shoot the video was unknown.[18] Ultimately, the chapel priest suggested that the video be investigated for violating electoral law.[19]

In addition to the financial confusion, the video's online circulation made its authors difficult to trace; it had first been placed on Facebook, before being uploaded onto YouTube by a user with no apparent connections to the production team. Yet this was typical for campaign songs in Mexico, which were often circulated anonymously online on multiple accounts, and

often subsequently deleted. Several songs falsely purporting to be by famous artists were created for the 2018 campaign, including a pro-Morena song uploaded to YouTube under the name of the *norteña* group Banda MS, which altered the lyrics to the group's love song 'Piénsalo'. The group responded in a statement to the magazine *hey!* that they 'do not belong to, nor support, any political party […] [Banda MS] distances itself from the use being made of one of our songs'.[20] Another recording uploaded to YouTube claimed to show Mexican pop icon Juan Gabriel dedicating his 1980 hit song 'El Noa Noa' to Morena, when in reality the singer had built his career around support for the PRI under single-party rule, and in any case had passed away in 2016.[21] The recording was sung by an impersonator, who changed the chorus 'Let's go to the Noa Noa, let's go to dance' to 'Let's go with Morena, I'll vote for Morena'. In this context, the line between satire and reality was easily crossed; these fakes could be passed off as humorous in intent, but they were taken seriously by many YouTube commenters.

Campaign songs thus had a troublesome relationship to authentication: although these songs sought to foment personal trust in politicians, they frequently themselves became a focus of suspicion of the Mexican political system. In turn, as explored in the following section, this mistrust reflected the harsh economic realities of musicianship in Mexico, as musicians creating campaign music looked to negotiate politically divisive terrain while retaining their audiences.

Musicking electoral politics

During the campaign I conducted research with several artists who had written campaign songs, seeking to understand their motivations and how these songs complemented their broader livelihoods. I also interviewed several workers at a public relations agency hired to produce music videos for the 2018 campaign. Each of the musicians I interviewed supported Morena and AMLO, although one had been paid to write a song for a candidate for the incumbent PRI. These artists formed part of a vast group of 'hidden musicians' (Finnegan 1989) whose typical anonymity tended to reflect economic and political insecurity. Each made music as a source of income, although some drew their main livelihoods from other lines of work. They combined campaign songwriting with other musical activities, such as performing at dances. Felt freedoms of expression were influenced by location: while some musicians received death threats after publishing campaign songs, the musicians I spoke to who lived in the United States told me that they felt safer to write pro-Morena songs there than in Mexico, whose political system was corrupted by drug cartels.

The political imbalance among the musicians I spoke to reflected two things: first, as recognized by journalist Roberto Ponce, there was a

genuine groundswell of user-generated songs supporting Morena which reflected the party's widespread popularity. Second, artists who had written songs for the establishment parties (that is, the PRI, the PAN and the PRD) were both more likely to have been paid to do so, and more likely to mention this fact. As I was told by members of agencies hired by political parties to create campaign promotional material for the 2018 elections, Morena solicited promotional material that looked home-made, partly as a demonstration of popular support, and partly to distance themselves from the polished image of the established parties. Specifically, Morena asked for music that employed colloquial language, and even requested that agencies reduce the audio and image quality on music videos made to promote their campaign (although, agency workers told me, this did not reduce their fee). The clearest overall effect was to obstruct efforts to distinguish popular and professional support for the party. Such paid-for but home-spun efforts, however, may also have inspired and validated genuine *pro bono* musical support for Morena. While it is difficult to map the economy of campaign musicianship in Mexico, it is worth noting that Morena's official campaign expenditure was about a quarter of that spent by the largest mainstream parties (the PAN and the PRI).[22] On the surface, qualitative observations that pro-Morena songs were written *pro bono* align with quantitative campaign spending trends – although it may also, as suspected by some, suggest undeclared campaign spending.

All of the musicians I spoke to told me that they had written pro-Morena songs out of personal conviction, rather than being paid to do so. While some were long-standing supporters of AMLO, others had begun to support him only recently. One told me that, having been previously apolitical, he had fallen ill during the election campaign and noticed AMLO trending on Twitter; subsequently, he became a supporter and wrote a song celebrating the candidate. Several respondents painted a narrative of Damascene conversion, in which previously apolitical musicians became aware of corruption in Mexico, and were inspired to become politically engaged by the charismatic, authentic figure of AMLO. Yet respondents also told of desperation and disillusionment in Mexican politics, and painted AMLO as morally detached from the corrupt political mainstream. For these individuals AMLO was synonymous with democracy, and thus with hope – reflecting the candidate's repeated mid-campaign declarations that 'we are constructing a democracy'.

Equally, these musicians' profiles could benefit from writing campaign songs. Shared on YouTube and Facebook, their pro-Morena music videos generally reached a far wider audience than their other songs, and garnered a vociferously positive reaction from online commenters. Some respondents had been invited to perform at Morena events after creating campaign songs. Jonathan Higuera, a full-time performer of *música regional* and *música norteña* from Sinaloa, was excited to have met AMLO at a local rally and to

have passed the candidate a CD of his music. Support for AMLO and Morena was often connected to the hardship linked to professional musicianship in Mexico. For instance, the members of Hidalgo-based group Samperio Show directly related their long-standing support for AMLO to their experiences working in music. Band leader Luis told me about the frustrating and economically challenging experience of making a living from music in Hidalgo; he blamed corruption and, in particular, the PRI's longstanding governance of the state.

This economic hardship necessitated a great deal of creative flexibility. Samperio Show, for instance, was a *banda versátil* ('versatile band'): a group whose repertoire covered diverse genres including *música norteña*, *cumbia*, *salsa*, and *tropical*. Versatility opened up a greater number of performance opportunities, and constituted a wider ethic of musicianship for these bands: in order to survive groups had to respond flexibly to high and low 'seasons' for music, present a flexible economic model (including lower prices for smaller ensembles) to attract the custom of both well-off and poorer clients, and be able to play their songs for audiences of any background. But such flexibility also manifested, for many musicians, in a need to include or exclude political content, depending on audiences. Jonathan Higuera, who fronted and composed for the *norteña* group Jonathan Higuera Y Su Estado Mayor, had a similar attitude to live events to that of Samperio Show (saying that 'wherever they ask us, we go'); his band could perform in a variety of genres, such as cumbia and *norteña*, and they also managed the music market astutely by varying prices for different locations, spaces and audiences. While Jonathan's pro-Morena corrido[23] 'Ya Sabes Quien' received almost a million views on YouTube, the singer only performed this song on request, or to audiences he knew to support the party: 'I play my music […] I can't be singing propaganda for someone who isn't paying me to do so'. Jonathan made most of his living by playing live at *fiestas*, where he felt that political discourse within music was inappropriate: 'the music I play is to distract people from the problems they have. People go to dances [*bailes*] to forget their problems'.

Comparatively few of the pro-Morena songs written by these musicians contained information relating to policy. The one exception was Samperio Show, which wrote both a song dedicated to AMLO and one promoting the Morena candidate to represent Hidalgo in the national Senate, Julio Menchaca Salazar. Band percussionist and composer Luis, who also worked as a trader, saw music as an ideal shared language through which to ensure that people 'knew and understood what [AMLO] represented for Mexico'. Samperio Show's pro-Morena song was a *cumbia*[24] built around the call-and-response refrain 'With López Obrador (for a better Mexico)/ With López Obrador (we're going to live better)'. The song's second verse seeks to inform the listener of Morena's policy proposals:

Que te alcance pa' comer (con López Obrador)	You'll have enough to eat (with López Obrador)
Gasolina mas barata (con …)	Cheaper gasoline (with …)
Escuela pa' tus hijos (con …)	School for your children (with …)
Pagar menos impuestos (con …)	Pay lower taxes (with …)
Basta ya de corrupción (con …)	An end to corruption (with …)
Doctor es inmediato (con …)	See a doctor straight away (with …)
Medicinas al instante (con …)	Instant medicine (with …)

These lyrics closely echo Morena supporters' grievances against the political establishment: first, the 2017 'gasolinazo', which saw gasoline prices rise dramatically after the PRI government removed price controls, leading to mass protests; second, the high corruption in Mexico, which AMLO promised to reduce. Equally, the first verse of Samperio Show's *cumbia* takes a different approach, vouching for the candidate's trustworthiness: 'Decent, honest, and transparent man, is López Obrador […] integrity and values: he always carries them with him'.

Most other songs by the musicians I researched took the person-focused approach of this cumbia's first verse, rather than the policy-driven approach of its second. For instance, the song 'Canción Para AMLO' was written and performed by Perla Ramos, a musician based in Texas. A mother of three children, Perla had been a full-time musician for 22 years, and had written many songs for political parties. Historically, her voting record was conservative; from the north of the country, she had previously been a supporter of the PAN, but came to reject the Mexican political establishment, especially with the worsening impact of the war on drugs. To Perla, AMLO stood out as an anti-establishment politician who would offer an alternative to the failing status quo: 'The strategies of the PRI and the PAN haven't been enough, so there must be another strategy to follow'. Equally, Perla felt that AMLO was a uniquely trustworthy figure. The trust she placed in AMLO was expressed in her musicianship, through a pro-Morena song that deployed familiar forms of popular music authenticity. While the songs she had been paid to write for other political parties looked to 'identify the candidate and their (policy) proposals well', 'Canción Para AMLO' was published on YouTube in early April 2018, and was written out of a 'feeling of citizenship, not because a candidate paid me to promote them and say nice things about them'.

The creative process for 'Canción Para AMLO' was indicative of how musicians writing songs for political parties frequently had to manage anonymity. The song's lyrics were authored by an individual known to Perla, who wished to remain anonymous for political reasons. These lyrics were then edited by a journalist from Reynosa,[25] and Perla wrote and recorded the music in Texas. Initially, the song was written as a corrido, and the lyrics contain common features of corridos such as the singer's farewell formula ('I'm going, I'm saying goodbye, there's no time to lose') and octosyllabism (McDowell 2000).

Nonetheless, Perla chose not to arrange the lyrics as a corrido, classifying her song instead as *son huasteco*.[26]

Despite the collaborative and mobile way that 'Canción Para AMLO' was composed, the song's lyrical content, performance style, and accompanying video emphasized a direct, personal relationship with the political candidate it supported. The song opens with a pessimistic image based on the animals depicted on the Mexican national flag ('The eagles here are eaten up by the snakes'; indeed, in the YouTube video for the song this lyric is accompanied by footage of a struggle between an eagle and a snake). In response, the song suggests that 'upon eradicating the rotten/the joy will return', simultaneously locating the target as corruption (that is, 'rot') and positioning the stakes of this political struggle as inherently affective. These lyrics are accompanied by close-up images of voters at political rallies whose concerned, disappointed faces stand in for that of the viewer. At the song's chorus, roughly halfway through the video, there is a shift of tense from a general description of Mexico's problems to direct experience, as the figure of AMLO, narrated in the informal second person 'tú', is presented: 'To you [*a tí*] Lopez Obrador, I dedicate this song'. This first- to second-person dynamic continues for the next few lines, when Perla sings:

Dejaré de ser cautivo,	I will no longer be captive
En ti brilla la esperanza	In you, hope shines
veo que tu proyecto avanza,	I see your project move forward
y eso me mantiene vivo	And that keeps me alive

The sense of hope inspired by AMLO's campaign is narrated in the second person, constructing a strong sense of intimacy between the singer – who stands in for the hearer – and the candidate. It is also conditional on the exclusion of the 'rotten' establishment. The effect is to present politics as complexly inter-subjective, foregrounding the affectively textured individual relationship to politics, mediated through the figure of AMLO.

These intimate affects are reinforced by Perla's performance style – she sings without accompaniment, and frequently constricts her throat in the act of vocalizing. They are also mediated by genre; the song's range of affective possibilities results from the singer's decision to adapt lyrics initially written in a corrido form for a *son huasteco* piece. With an arrangement including two acoustic guitars, bass guitar, and contralto flute, 'Canción Para AMLO' is constructed around a *son huasteco* rhythm shifting between groups of three-time and two-time bars in which the first downstroke on rhythm guitar is muted with the palm, while the other guitar and the flute perform *requinto* (solo) roles. Both its harmonic backing, written in a minor key and featuring consecutive major chords a semitone apart, and its vocal style, containing several leaps between chest and falsetto voices, also recall *son huasteco*. By contrast, corridos are, with very few exceptions, set in a

major key and typically limited to the tonic, dominant and subdominant. While corridos typically contain linear narratives told by disinterested narrators which are valued for their accuracy and objectivity (McDowell 2000, pp. 62–64), *son huasteco* tends to engage more explicitly with emotional human experience. The *son huasteco* genre thus presents a different set of affordances for performing intimacy which are exploited within 'Canción Para AMLO'.

By the time of the election, Perla's song had attracted just over 20,000 views and almost a hundred YouTube comments – more than any other videos the singer has uploaded to the website. Comments were vital for authenticating the video and its political value; entirely supportive of the singer and of Morena, they tended to combine praise of the song's aesthetic qualities with support for AMLO and broader patriotic sentiment. For instance, one commenter described how the song 'made my hair stand on end', another stated that '[t]his song moves me greatly, to tears and fills me with pride', and another wrote that '[a]ll the profound feeling of a wounded people is a beautiful thing'. These comments made the political both personal and affective; in the words of Moore (2002, p. 219), they 'transferred' individually authenticated experience 'to a situation whereby others are allotted the same vividness of experience such that their actions ground the first individual's security'.

In turn, there is a marked difference between the style of 'Canción Para AMLO' and that of another campaign song written by Perla, this time for Gustavo Rico de Saro, a PRI candidate running in Reynosa, Sinaloa for the national Chamber of Deputies. Perla's approach to this song was different from the beginning. Since Perla 'didn't want to speak well of [him] because [he] told me he was [nice]' she 'sat down with him […] checked his proposals, spoke to him to get to know him, and asked others' opinions of him'. Over a *cumbia* rhythm intended to be 'joyful, loud [and] appealing', Perla sings in harmony, introducing the PRI candidate in the third person. Many of the lyrics address the same issues of trust to which pro-AMLO songs responded; this politician is positioned as a change candidate, described as 'a man who, being dependable, will give us a hand/a man of work, who likes challenges […] we don't need pure words, [others] only promise'. These sentiments accompany information about the candidate's name and district, and the date of the vote. The result was an official campaign song intended to identify the candidate in political adverts and at campaign events.

Perla's pro-PRI song contrasts strongly with 'Canción para AMLO'; where the latter is intimate, direct and personal, the former is impersonal, indirect and to a greater degree informational. Indeed, real-life trust relations were inverted in the creative process for these two songs: while a politician the singer met with in person is vouched for indirectly and tepidly, the object of the more intimate song, AMLO, is a figure the singer has never met. This

contrast highlights a consistent feature of pro-Morena songs in the 2018 election: they constructed political trust as a correlate of personal qualities attributed to individual candidates, in opposition to the legitimacy of Mexico's political system. Political trust is also, however, here aestheticized and mediatized; narrated through the discrete affordances of musical genre. In the following section I examine a contrasting project which, using a more transnationally legible genre, highlighted a role for music both in communicating information about democratic operations, and in representing institutions for electoral governance.

Hip hop at the National Electoral Institute

In May 2018 two Mexico City-based rappers, Ximbo and Danger, were hired to work on behalf of Mexico's National Electoral Institute (INE). INE had been created as the remit of the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) was expanded to include municipal and state elections in 2014. On its website the Institute's aims are described as 'to strengthen electoral democracy and guarantee the exercise of citizens' political-electoral rights';[27] INE seeks to facilitate free and fair elections in Mexico. In the 2018 campaign, INE's remit extended to informative projects; INE President Lorenzo Córdoba wrote in newspaper *El Universal* a few days before the election that 'a free vote is an informed vote'.[28] This focus reflected deep concerns about the rise of 'fake news', as INE increasingly saw its role as 'defending democracy from misinformation'.[29]

Ximbo and Danger were contracted to perform in a series of brief music videos designed to facilitate engagement with the national electoral debates. These videos, released on Twitter and on INE's website, contained raps of roughly fifteen seconds each which informed voters about the topics covered during the second election debate, held on 20 May 2018 in the Autonomous University of Baja California. Under the overall rubric of 'Mexico in the world' – the theme of this debate – the themes addressed included borders, Donald Trump's proposed border wall, repatriation, human rights, migration, international trade, undocumented migrants, exports, and remittances; each video featured black-and-white footage of the rappers performing, followed by INE's logo and the Twitter hashtag #VotoLibre ('free vote'). Twenty-three videos were published online, although Ximbo and Danger had created more than twice this number in two days of intensive recording. The videos were uploaded onto YouTube and Twitter, although since their main purpose was to supplement the second electoral debate, links to them appeared at appropriate points during the live coverage of this debate on INE's website.

For these videos, Ximbo told me, they sought to use straightforward, colloquial language 'with a very simple flow and meter, so that people would understand it […] it wasn't a question of rapping really fast or anything

too complex'. Writing in such a widely legible fashion meant eschewing much of the linguistic playfulness common within hip hop creativity. The lyrics for their video on 'Democracy', for example, are as follows:

Democracia significa que tu eliges	Democracy means that you choose
Que tu tienes el poder de escoger a quienes dirigen	That you have the power to elect those who rule
Demo y Cracia vienen del griego	Demo and cracy come from Greek
Juntos forman la frase 'el gobierno del pueblo'	Together they form the phrase 'government of the people'

As this example shows, writing simply could also mean refusing the critical perspective on Mexican politics typical of the hip-hop scene, where national democracy is often dismissed as a sham. We are presented here instead with a minimalist, Schumpeterian definition of democracy as a process centred upon periodic elections and the transfer of power.

Ximbo and Danger were high-profile and longstanding figures in Mexico's rap scene, and were active recording artists. By the time of my research the pair were frequently performing together during live rap battles. Danger was contacted first, by an agency with which he had collaborated while organizing a series of events featuring freestyle rap battles, themed rap 'epic battles' featuring famous figures (such as Shakespeare and Cervantes), and spoken-word poetry. The subsequent inclusion of Ximbo in the project, both rappers told me, was partially motivated by the goal of achieving equal gender representation. Both made their living from hip-hop; like the other musicians interviewed as part of this study, then, engaging musical creativity with electoral politics was incorporated into a wider portfolio career requiring flexibility and adaptability. Nonetheless, neither had been forced by economic necessity to participate, and both gave positive justifications for wanting to do so; Danger, for instance, saw value in the goal of using rap 'to communicate ideas that aren't clear for people'. Yet Danger supplemented this assessment with reasoning rooted in suspicion, stating that if they chose not to participate, INE would hire 'some less-well-known rappers and coach them to do what they want'. 'At least this way', he concluded, 'we did what we wanted to do'.

Participating in this project highlighted the complexities of national and international politics. Since, as Ximbo told me, 'there were many themes that neither of us were particularly clear about', the pair had to conduct a significant amount of research, including consulting the dictionary, conducting online research, and taking advice from political scientists, legal scholars and lawyers. Equally challenging was to fit this information into a brief four-line rap. Many of these themes concerned technical, intricate, and consequential organizational matters which the pair were expected to discuss in a disinterested, accurate, representative way. This mode of writing was unusual within the hip-hop scene, where creative engagement with political themes tended

to be more polemical in intent; 'I would have loved to have given more of my own opinion', Ximbo told me, 'but it wasn't like that – we had to be very neutral'. Where campaign song tended to presume of musicians extra-ordinary power to intuit public sentiments, using music to inform the public caused these artists to express humility about the political role they could play.

Dissatisfaction with the pressure to be 'neutral' responded to moments in which representatives of INE intervened to ensure that their lyrics were not overly targeted or critical. In one instance, in response to the theme 'migrant rights', Ximbo initially wrote that 'they must be respected, and it's the government's duty to see that they're respected'. Nonetheless, others on the project objected to these lyrics: 'They asked me to change it […] to say that it's everyone's duty, or to say something else, but not to say that it's the government's duty.' On another occasion, Ximbo performed lyrics written by her collaborator about the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) which, to her frustration, failed to reflect the economic injustices built into this treaty:

> I had to say that NAFTA […] is for these three countries so that trade flows better. And I was like, hold on. It's much more complicated than that. And it really screws over Mexico, obviously. And there wasn't time to say that […] I don't know if [Danger] wanted to remain completely neutral and only say what things are, but it's just that behind that it's much more important that people can use their own judgement [*criterio*] and that they know what's going on beneath the surface. Because if I tell you 'it's a treaty to make trade flow better' that sounds good, no?

Such dissatisfaction is indicative of the broader contradictions of a 'neutral' INE more generally. As has been argued especially forcefully by feminist scholars (e.g. Fraser 1990), claims for political neutrality tend to mask as much as bracket difference, facilitating the perpetuation of unidentified inequalities of power. Here, the notion of neutrality served to shield the governments of Mexico and the United States from criticism, and inscribed the neoliberal economic ideology accepted within mainstream Mexican political discourse into ahistorical and context-free definitions. Ximbo's dissatisfaction with the pair's NAFTA-themed rap not only relates to the limited information it transmitted, but – echoing Freire's (2006 [1970]) criticism of the so-called 'banking model' of education – to broader ways that the project sidelined critical engagement in favour of constrained didacticism. She touches upon a broader tension among politically engaged rappers in Mexico: whether to use hip-hop principally to transmit relevant information, or to call people to occupy a condition of active, engaged citizenship.

The project's overall outcomes were difficult to judge. INE's president Lorenzo Córdoba credited its online strategy, 'oriented towards youth audiences', for the high (36 million) online viewing figures for the debates.[30]

Nonetheless, Ximbo and Danger reflected critically on the execution of their project, drawing attention to technological setbacks: since their videos only appeared in links embedded in the video of the debate on INE's website, viewers had to pause the debate to see them. Perhaps most consequential was the response from the wider rap community in Mexico City. Under a compilation of the pair's INE videos on YouTube, for instance, almost all comments are critical: some criticize the involvement of hip hop with politics (one begging them to 'keep hip hop far away from this business' and another decrying the pair's entanglement with the 'INE circus'), while others contend that the project undermines these rappers' credibility within the hip-hop scene, one saying 'If Danger had put out this bullshit before his rap battle with Proof, Proof would have ground him into the dirt'.[31] Some of my research participants from the hip-hop scene were even more damning: one, a long-standing rapper from Estado de México's underground scene, described the project as an attempt 'to legitimize a decaying and dishonest system';[32] another experienced rapper from Puebla characterized INE as 'one of the most corrupt institutions in Mexico' and said that the pair should be more 'consistent with their principles'.[33]

This suspicious reception in their musical community was not lost on the two rappers. Both had received positive messages from viewers online, including from people saying that the pair's videos had motivated them to watch the debates. Yet the pair had also anticipated a critical response prior to participating, Ximbo saying that 'people in rap criticize a lot […] it seemed to them that it was like selling ourselves to the Institute'. Indeed, the pair responded publicly to criticism during an online interview about the project with the newspaper *El Universal*. Towards the beginning of the interview, after framing the project as a response to 'political apathy' among young people, Danger distanced himself from INE ('it's not to support the government, not even INE'), and placed his participation in the project in continuity with his other social projects. With INE, Danger said, his goal was 'to use a platform to carry out social communication'. He then closed the interview with a freestyle rap responding to four keywords: poverty, decisions, *impuestos* (meaning either 'taxes' or 'impositions') and hypocrisy. His freestyle both condemned those in the hip-hop community disparaging the pair's work without acting themselves, and highlighted INE's distance from party politics, thus defending the pair from the accusation of complicity with Mexico's political system:

> It's about doing it, what we did with INE of course/but not with a political party, because nothing was imposed on us […] It's about doing things, whether well or badly, but don't fear looking stupid, brother (*carnal*)/and if you like to criticize, we welcome your criticism/But we prefer actually doing things to mere clicktivism (*ser activista virtual*).

Danger's ambivalence is understandable. INE has been repeatedly mired in controversy, and has particular problems with legitimacy among young people and those on the political Left (Ortega Ortíz and Somuano Ventura 2015). Public confidence in INE[34] had fallen significantly since the 2006 elections when, despite evidence of electoral anomalies, the institution refused to call a recount, and AMLO's center-left coalition, which had narrowly lost, refused to recognize the result (76–78). Meyer notes that after this point, Mexico's electoral institutions lost 'much of their credibility, such that a sector of the opposition simply does not accept them as legitimate institutions' (2017, p. 319, see Morris and Klesner 2010, pp. 1277–1278). In response, Ortega Ortíz and Somuano Ventura recommend addressing the institution's lack of trust among leftist groups by 'strengthening channels of communication'; and combating the mistrust in the organization among young people through greater use of social media (2015, pp. 136–137). It was reasonable to suspect that INE-funded programmes to stimulate engagement with elections might be intended to bolster the legitimacy of the institution itself.

In turn, Ximbo and Danger's views about INE were themselves ambivalent. At points, both rappers defended their participation in the project by highlighting INE's political neutrality. For instance, Danger told me that 'its budget comes from the government, but they have the capacity to take decisions without consulting the government – well, without receiving orders'. Nonetheless, he demonstrated skepticism about whether the organization was fulfilling its mission: '[INE] is charged with ensuring that elections are fair and democratic […] Really I don't know whether it is or not'. Danger both acknowledged mistrust of the organization and expressed exasperation with it: 'everything INE does online receives criticism, no matter what it does. If they publish something you'll see lots of criticism of fraud from 6 and 12 years ago, although the same people no longer work for INE'. In a similar vein, even as Ximbo emphasized INE's 'autonomy', she concurred that it suffered problems of legitimacy relating to credible suspicions of electoral fraud. Her criticisms dovetailed with broader cynicism about Mexico's political system, a long-standing conviction not to vote, and a self-identification as an anarchist.

On the surface, then, INE's hip-hop project presented a strong contrast to the user-generated pro-Morena songs discussed above, which aestheticized and dramatized trust at an individual and inter-subjective level. Ximbo and Danger's project sought to facilitate more inclusive participation in electoral politics by aiding voters – especially those from disenfranchized groups – to authenticate the claims made by politicians. Yet the choice of hip-hop did more than engage a disengaged youth demographic: as both a transnational, highly commensurable genre and one rooted in language, hip-hop pointed towards a classical liberal account of the universal affects of deliberative,

rational democracy. Even the stripped-down, restrained beats used for this project could be heard as affectively 'neutral'.

It was evident, however, that the gesture behind the project towards disinterested, institutional legitimacy extended only inconsistently to these rappers themselves. Political and personal trust were not so easily separated (Morris and Klesner 2010, p. 1262); through participating in this project, Ximbo and Danger were subject to personal criticism, swept into the complex, pre-existing vortices of trust and mistrust that had already coalesced around INE, and confronted with the conflicting utopias and realities concerning the institution's status as a neutral arbiter of electoral affairs. It became clear that the interpretive line dividing a well-meaning attempt to facilitate participation in electoral politics from a self-interested attempt by INE to gain legitimacy was a thin one, which reflected the goodwill already afforded to the organization. Criticism of the project suggested a Janus-faced dynamic of authentication; where the credibility of the pair led some to engage more with the electoral debates, the mistrust of INE among the hip-hop community also began to afflict Ximbo and Danger vicariously.

Concluding remarks: the affects of democratization

In 'Towards An Aesthetic Of Popular Music', Frith (1987, p. 46) sought to move 'from a description of music's social functions to an understanding of how we can and do value it'. I seek to accomplish something similar, here, by articulating the value of campaign song to questions of political trust; by showing how campaign song invoked, and built upon, discrete affective literacies encoded in the affordances of popular music – figuring democratization as variously universal, transnational, and singular, or as open-ended, multiple, and heterospecific.

This article looks to write Mexican campaign song into democratic participation by exploring political authentication on two levels: personal and systemic. Both imbricate music in the processes of electoral politics, seeking to include new political publics by articulating diverse entertainment cultures to 'the requirements of political citizenship' (van Zoonen 2005, p. 15). In the first, music is a vicarious proving-ground for a political candidate's honesty, and thus the veracity of this candidate's claims. The perceived authenticity of the musician and that of the candidate are placed into a mutually defining relationship. Democratic citizenship is thus figured as a deeply affectionate endeavour (cf. Stokes 2010, p. 105). In the second, music acts as a means of civic education, facilitating voters to assess the claims made by political candidates. It seeks to engage voters through exposure to information; yet it may come at the expense of more critical, partisan, and less self-avowedly 'neutral' forms of engaging voters with electoral politics. Each of these forms of political authentication advances different diagnoses of the problem of low

trust in Mexico's political system: one roots this problem in personalities, and another sees it as the product of a lack of societally aggregated political knowledge. They also have distinct implications for musical expression, as the analysis presented above has shown; the genre-specific musical affordances they exploit can differ dramatically.

Nonetheless, this analysis also reveals the mutual imbrication of personal and systemic authentication, observing the unpredictable personal consequences of engaging musically in a mistrusted electoral system. The production of campaign song is embedded in an economic system in which survival as a professional musician is exceptionally challenging. In this context 'authenticity' is often understood as something achieved, more a product of hard work than of musicians' moral purity. Throughout these experiences, authentication exceeds musicians' control; trust was related to narratives of political corruption, which limited the possibilities for musically and artistically narrating politicians' trustworthiness. Authentication emerges as a collaborative task shared between musicians, political figures, and publics. Given such unpredictability, it is no surprise that public relations companies' main strategy to control their musical output's post-election meaning is comparatively crude: they delete these songs from social networks. Clearly, the interests of these 'hidden musicians' themselves are sidelined through many of the ways that their music is mediated.

This analysis leaves plenty to discover about what is a largely opaque musical culture. More research needs to be carried out regarding the musical cultures of elections in general, especially in global perspective. In particular, the analysis presented here is carried out with producers rather than consumers of campaign song; it therefore cannot address the extent to which campaign songs may have affected voter choice. The approach presented here does, however, help to respond to disparaging domestic commentary about election song, and to the questions this commentary raises concerning inclusion, exclusion, and class. On the one hand, this article aims to write campaign song into discourse about democratization. It shows how music is used to engage new or marginal publics in the play of politics – either by seeking to facilitate informed public engagement in political discourse, or by personalizing and aestheticizing it. On the other, political authentication implies 'inauthentic' others – for instance, the professionalized promotional campaigns associated with the established political parties, or the 'rotten' political elite (cf. Grossberg 1992). Campaign song thus raises questions about who gets to define the scope of democracy and democratization.

In the wake of the election, AMLO and Morena have deepened their populist affectionate rhetoric, narrating a utopian 'Republic of Love' in response to conflict in Mexican society while continuing to conduct divisive politics (Hanrahan and Aroch Fugellie 2019). It is tempting to argue that campaign music

was involved in a certain reorientation of the political field towards personality, and away from apparently 'disinterested' decision-making. The use of music as part of electoral communications may be taken straightforwardly as a means for politicians to win *at the expense of* democratic functioning. As one Mexican commentator recently argued, political campaigns are often 'bad for democracy' because they 'tend to move the more emotive part, at times with little rationality, of their electoral base'.[35] Repeatedly, official reports on strengthening democratic political culture in Mexico have offered no discussion of artistic media such as campaign songs in the play of politics during elections, focusing instead on how to facilitate 'rational', informed decision-making in political communication (Esteinou Madrid 2013, Caballero Álvarez 2018). In turn, marketing strategists have tended to view campaign music as a means to stimulate 'emotional' over 'rational' decision-making.[36] One public relations operative who worked on elections told me of concern about the ways that 'politicians from a Third World country take popular songs and turn them into their jingles, I mean, it's like a resource, it's horrible but effective'.

Nonetheless, 'rational/emotional' binary divisions assume a particular paternalism when applied to campaign music in new democracies such as Mexico, where there are substantive historical reasons for mistrust of political institutions. In Mexico, the binary division between 'rationality' and its other maps onto elite anxieties about national backwardness, in which democratization can be narrated as a civilizing or modernizing project (Lomnitz-Adler 2001, Esteinou Madrid 2013, pp. 84–87). Within this frame, campaign songs are prone to be treated as curiosities; something other than serious political texts.

These debates speak to a certain faultline within cultural studies itself between championing culture and critiquing it (Puoskari 2004, pp. 168–169); between critiques of affective politics and/as demagoguery, and openness to the epistemic possibilities presented by the affective turn. Scholars of culture have aired critiques of the limitations of the familiar 'transnational language of politics' (Tadiar 2009, p. 21); critiqued the substitution of political debate with charisma (e.g. Grossberg 1992, Lipsitz 1994, p. 152); and aired anxieties about the implications of 'incommensurability' for political deliberation (Spielman 2019). The concepts of personal and systemic authentication explored in this article fall on different sides of this faultline; each implies a different vision of democratic cultures, and music's role within them; and neither has straightforward, predictable effects or affordances. Most important: in practice, personal and systemic authentication are shown here to be thoroughly intertwined. This is seen, above, in the ways that publics authenticate campaign song in their responses to it; and in how personal feelings of mistrust affected an attempt to foment systemic legitimacy through music.

As Papacharissi argues, it is vital not to overlook the ways that 'affect, feeling, and emotion […] reflexively drive movements that express rationally focused expressions of ideological beliefs' (2015, p. 3). In turn, democratization ought to be understood not as a singular process, but as open-ended, contingent, creative, and affective. Music emerges not as an exception to political discourse, but as an extension of the same; it reflects the patterns of inclusion and exclusion of political campaigns. Complex entanglements are documented here between trust, authentication, and the affective literacies of campaign song. The affordances of campaign song offer not only a way to win elections: they connect people with the play of politics in Mexico. To sound the Republic of Love, in a fragile, insecure and disunified nation, is a reasonable thing to do.

Notes

1. Interview, Perla Ramos, June 2018.
2. Campaign song may also be wrongly connected to illiteracy; in fact Mexico's literacy rate is above 96 percent, and campaign song videos tend to be accompanied by written lyrics.
3. Imagen Noticias, 'Esta es la nueva canción de AMLO/Qué Importa', 17 April 2018. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8CE8BpkXB-A (accessed 20 May 2020).
4. On this basis, political scientists have argued that low-trust societies create conditions for de-democratization, where high trust facilitates institutional legitimacy and large-scale organization; and that while participating in elections tends to raise trust in government (Hooghe 2018, p. 626), groups that lose elections also lose trust in the political system (Listhaug and Jacobsen 2017, pp. 561–562).
5. Indeed, some studies demonstrate a negative correlation between quality of democracy and political trust, positioning the most useful value within democracy as skepticism (Cleary and Stokes 2006).
6. https://www.proceso.com.mx/537652/la-dictadura-de-la-propaganda (accessed 18 December 2018).
7. https://www.proceso.com.mx/530861/el-costo-de-la-democracia (accessed 18 December 2018). The pair was writing in support of an initiative to combat 'fake news' about the elections, entitled Verificado 2018. Zimmerman and Eddens (2018, p. 968) argue that the 'rapid growth of post-truth anxieties is […] a classed phenomenon'; it is notable that the magazine *Proceso* principally reaches a middle-class, educated audience.
8. There was a perception among AMLO's supporters that only an overwhelming result would force the establishment to concede; one of the most widespread pro-AMLO slogans in 2018 was *voto masivo por AMLO* ('mass vote for AMLO'). In this way, mistrust was converted into a motivation for engagement in Mexico's electoral system (cf. Hooghe 2018). Indeed, even as AMLO held double-digit leads in the polls before election day, his supporters harbored suspicions that fraud would rob him of the election. See http://www.elfinanciero.com.mx/elecciones-2018/tenia-miedo-del-primero-de-julio-clouthier (accessed 17 January 2019).

9. Indeed, the PRI campaign song 'Es con Meade' (which is based on 'This Is Me' from the musical *The Greatest Showman*) contains several unsubtle visual cues relating AMLO to the Venezuelan government and suggesting that a Morena victory would trigger a stock market crisis: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GCbKhb79-vo (accessed 24 December 2018).
10. During the 2018 elections the PAN and PRD entered a national-level coalition.
11. https://www.proceso.com.mx/540425/partidos-intentaron-comprar-30-millones-de-votos-5-3-millones-aceptaron-por-500-pesos-accion-ciudadana (accessed 11 January 2019).
12. http://www.latimes.com/world/la-fg-mexico-fake-news-20180415-story.html (accessed 18 January 2019).
13. That is, within recent Mexican history: however, as Lomnitz explores, the play of politics in Mexico has often been centered upon the presidential persona (2001, pp. 81–109).
14. https://twitter.com/belindapop/status/1006937317410574336/video/1 (accessed 11 February 2021).
15. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xNpEpkbz14E (accessed 23 December 2018).
16. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=opmyIIdPlS0 (accessed 23 December 2018).
17. https://verificado.mx/falsas-facturas-que-recibio-belinda-por-apoyar-amlo/ (accessed 23 December 2018).
18. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8JngtNjRKkw&t=3s (accessed 17 December 2018).
19. https://verificado.mx/lo-que-sabemos-de-la-nina-bien/ (accessed 17 December 2018).
20. http://www.milenio.com/espectaculos/banda-ms-deslinda-campana-favor-amlo (accessed 18 December 2012). The YouTube video of the song has been taken down, but it is online at https://twitter.com/CuliacanMorena/status/951708650082463744/video/1 (accessed 19 December 2012).
21. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ijUbtpl-smA (accessed 19 December 2018).
22. https://www.proceso.com.mx/539134/el-ine-reporta-gastos-de-campana-anaya-sigue-como-lider-con-258-millones-de-pesos (accessed 1 January 2019).
23. A form of ballad popular in Mexico, typically organized into a linear narrative with a series of literary formulae, and often containing octosyllabic lines; see McDowell (2000).
24. A form of dance music with its origins in Colombia.
25. Hugo Ramos is erroneously credited with writing the lyrics in the YouTube video.
26. The song is described as a *huapango* (a term which refers to a subgenre of *son huasteco* but which is also often used interchangeably with it) on YouTube and in an article written for *Proceso* by the journalist Roberto Ponce. *Son huasteco* is a form of popular song from the Huasteca region of Mexico, typically featuring a violin, jarana and huapangera as well as falsetto singing.
27. https://www.ine.mx/sobre-el-ine/ (accessed 10 January 2019).
28. http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/articulo/lorenzo-cordova-vianello/nacion/hacia-el-voto-libre (accessed 17 January 2019).
29. http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/elecciones-2018/convoca-ine-defender-la-democracia-y-combatir-las-fake-news (accessed 18 January 2019).

30. http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/articulo/lorenzo-cordova-vianello/nacion/hacia-el-voto-libre (accessed 17 January 2019).
31. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aJDllhCU0qU (accessed 8 January 2018). Danger had a freestyle rap battle with Proof in 2017.
32. Online communication, Juan, June 2018.
33. Interview, Pedro, June 2018.
34. INE was known as the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) until 2014.
35. https://www.milenio.com/opinion/victor-reynoso/interes-publico/candidatos-y-gobernantes (accessed 31 October 2020).
36. https://politica.expansion.mx/mexico/2018/03/10/los-jingles-politicos-que-mueven-las-emociones-del-elector (accessed 31 October 2020).

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